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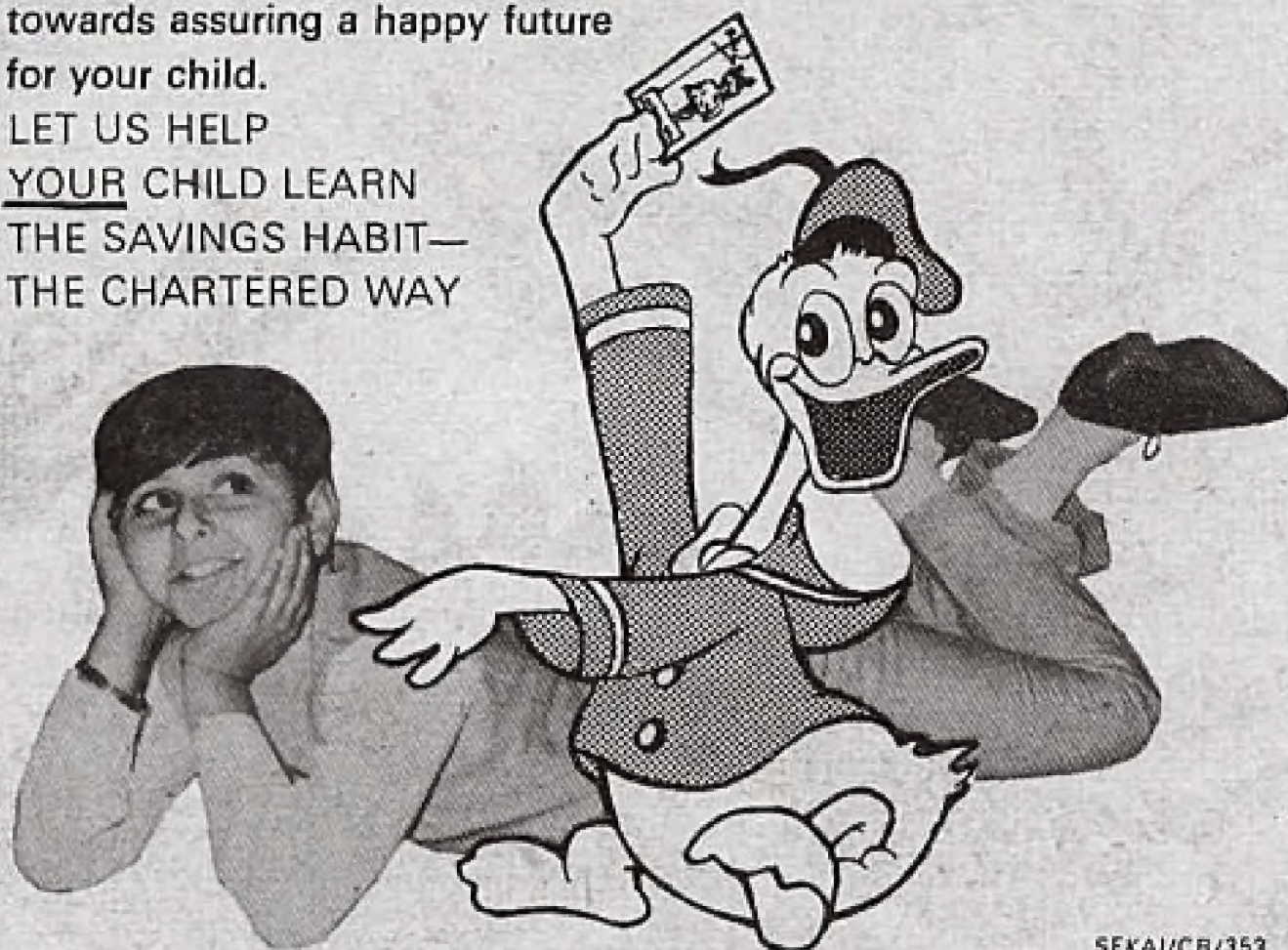
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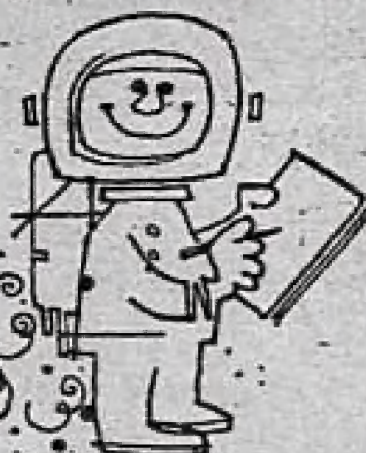


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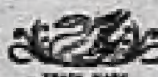
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**LEMON
ORANGE
PEPPERMINT
TUTTI-FRUTTI**



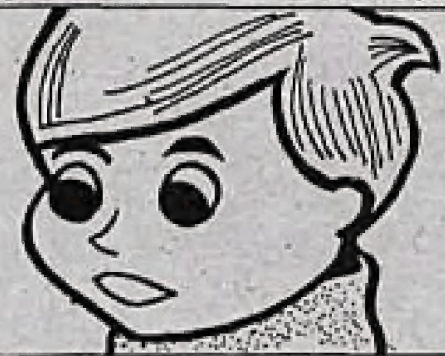
Playing it right...

We played a cricket match in school today Daddy. But I got out very soon.

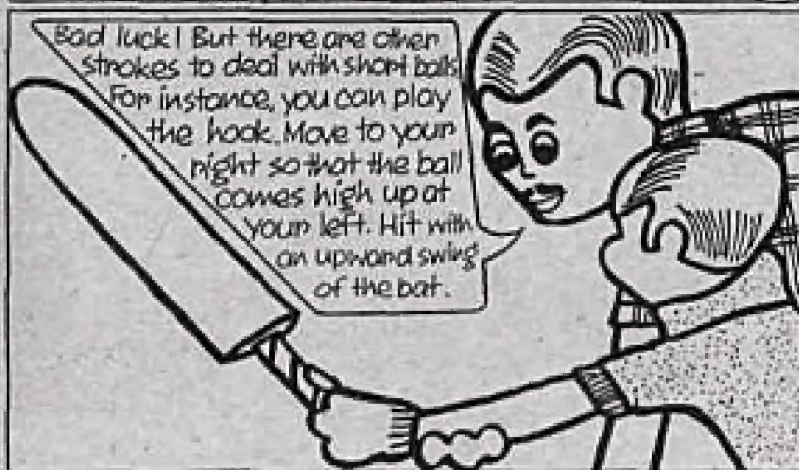
Why son, what happened?



Sunil bowled a short ball. I tried to cut, but edged a catch to the wicket-keeper.



Bad luck! But there are other strokes to deal with short balls. For instance, you can play the hook. Move to your right so that the ball comes high up at your left. Hit with an upward swing of the bat.



And if you hit with full force you will swing round completely. You may even find yourself facing the wicket-keeper!

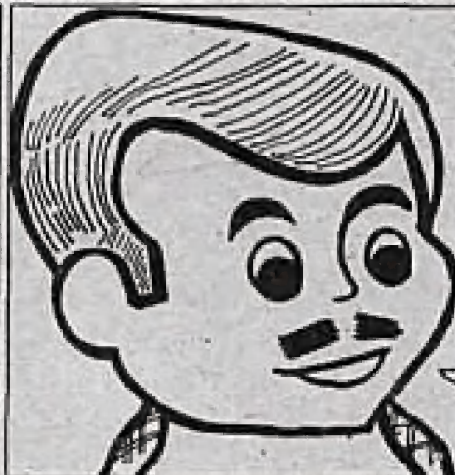


Now then, it's nearly eight-thirty, son. Off to bed. Have you brushed your teeth?

I washed my mouth after dinner, Dad.



That won't do son. You must brush your teeth every night and morning, to remove all decay-causing food particles. You must also massage the gums, so they'll be healthy and strong.



Yes, Daddy.



Come, let's both brush our teeth with Fonhan's toothpaste.



Fonhan's
the toothpaste
created by
a dentist



CHANDAMAMA

Vol: 2 No. 12

June 1972

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CHANDAMAMA SHORT STORY CONTEST
Rs. 350/- IN PRIZES—TURN TO PAGE 32



The Demon's Secret

Grandfather sat back in his chair, eager to enjoy all the political gossip and local scandal in the pages of his newspaper. But the incessant chatter of his grand-children, made concentration a little difficult.

"Dear me," said grandfather, looking over his glasses and trying to appear stern. "You talk so much, you remind me of the Demon Chandavarman."

"Who was this demon?" piped up little Radha, hoping that grandfather would tell them a story.

Grandfather put down his paper with a sigh. "Once upon a time," he began, by the

banks of a big river, lived the Demon Chandavarman, who was known throughout the land as the Wicked Demon.

The Wicked Demon used to jump onto the backs of unwary travellers and make them carry him down to the river. When they reached the river, he made his poor victim sit on the bank whilst he bathed, then afterwards he would grab his victim, drag him into the water and eat him up.

One day a priest was wandering through the forest, and from the low branches of a tree the Wicked Demon sprang on his back, and ordered the poor priest to carry him down to the river.

The priest, who was just as inquisitive as all grandchildren, started to ask a lot of questions to which the demon answered with loud guffaws of laughter.

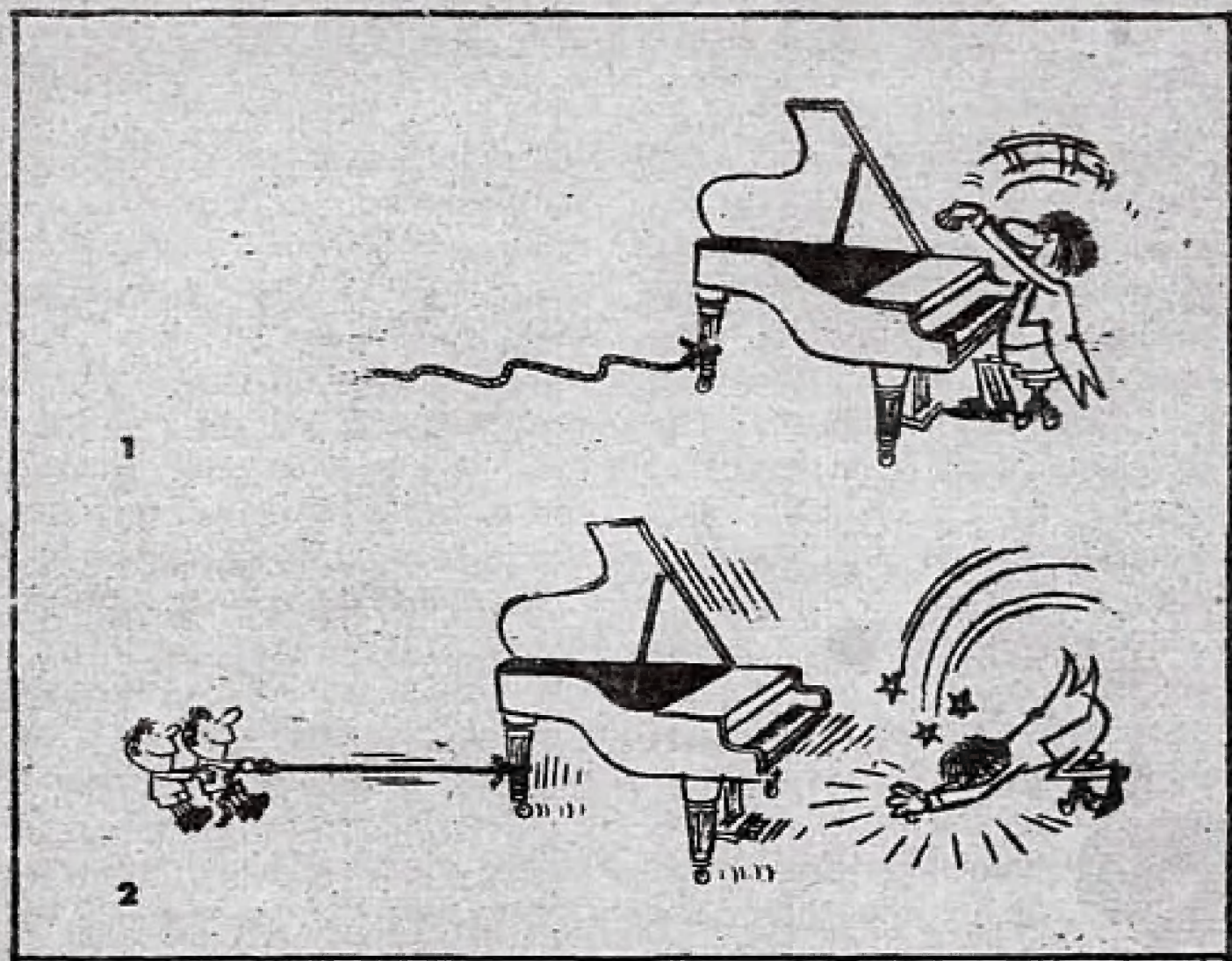
"Tell me," said the priest as they neared the river, "Why are the soles of your feet so soft and pink?"

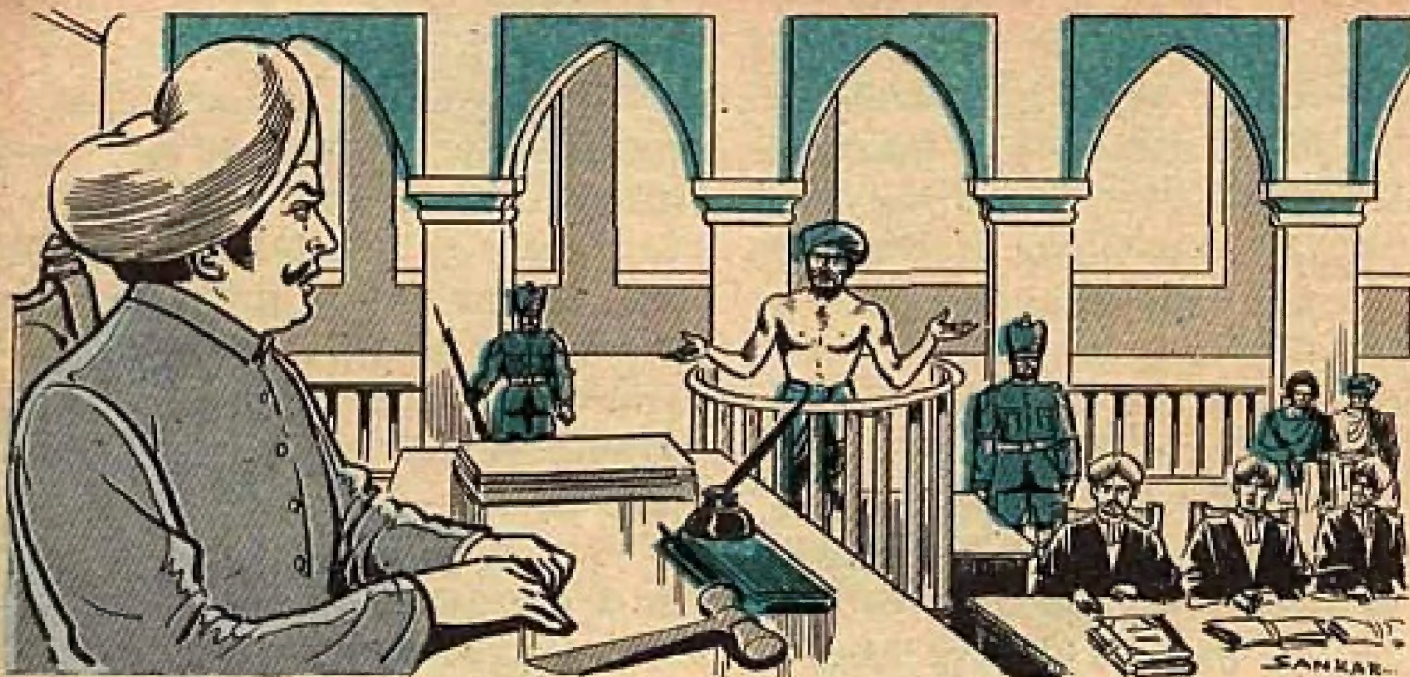
"That's my great secret," roared the demon. "I made a vow centuries ago never to walk on dry earth with wet feet."

The priest chuckled to himself as he realised that the demon

talked too much. When they reached the river, the priest was quite content to sink on the ground and rest his weary back. But once the Wicked Demon was well and truly in the water, the priest jumped to his feet and made off, knowing the silly demon would never run after him on dry earth.

The Wicked Demon stood in the river watching the disappearing figure of a good meal, and cursing himself for having talked too much.





In His Defence

Sunder was a rustic and rather a dull witted one at that. One day Sunder decided to make some ghee, but not possessing a suitable pot, borrowed a nice earthenware pot from a neighbour. The neighbour wasn't too happy at lending the pot and made Sunder promise to return it within two days.

When the ghee was made, Sunder stood the pot on the table and rubbed his hands with satisfaction. Now he kept a cat, which was forever hungry. The cat smelling the ghee, jumped on to the table and delicately put one of its paws

into the pot to see what smelt so nice.

Sunder shouted at the cat, which was far too occupied to take any notice of him. So Sunder took off one of his chappals and hurled it at the cat. It was an unlucky throw, for it missed the cat and hit the pot, which broke into two.

Knowing that his neighbour would be more than angry over the broken pot, Sunder found some glue, and managed to stick the pieces together again. Sunder waited until it was dark before he returned the pot, hoping that his neighbour wouldn't notice that it had been

broken. But the neighbour had sharp eyes, and shouted at Sunder. "Hey! That pot has been broken. What are you going to do about it?"

Sunder didn't wait to hear anymore, but bolted out of the house.

Two days later, Sunder received a summons to appear before the magistrate for wilfully breaking his neighbour's earthenware pot. Sunder was indignant that anyone should make a fuss over an old pot, then he remembered that there was an old lawyer in the village, who gave advice at a small fee.

So Sunder went to the lawyer and asked how he could defend himself against this charge. The lawyer having collected his fee of one rupee said. "There are only three ways in which you can answer this charge. One, you can swear that the pot was already broken when you borrowed it. Two, you can

say that your neighbour must have broken the pot after you returned it, or three, you can swear you never borrowed the pot."

Sunder thought this all sounded very good, and went home repeating these golden words of advice.

When the case was heard in court, the magistrate asked Sunder what he had to say in his defence. Sunder stood up, and puffing out his chest, exclaimed in a loud voice. "Your Honour, I swear the pot was already broken when I borrowed it, and I am sure my neighbour broke it after I returned it. And what is more, I never borrowed the pot."

With that Sunder sat down with a grin from ear to ear, waiting for the magistrate to dismiss the case. Instead of which, the magistrate fixed him with a baleful look and in an icy voice said. "Don't you dare come into this court telling a pack of lies. You will not only pay for a new pot, but I fine you ten rupees for perjury."

Sunder left the court, mumbling vile curses on all lawyers and magistrates who treated an honest man so shabbily.

IN NEXT ISSUE
THE FIRST HERO
OF EVEREST

*The graphic story that led to
the conquest of the world's
most formidable mountain*



THE MINSTREL

Long ago, in the town of Novgorod, in far away Russia, there lived a minstrel named Sadko. He earned his living by playing on a balalaika, a kind of guitar, to entertain the guests at the great banquets which the nobles gave. As long as there were plenty of feasts and dances, he made enough money to live comfortably.

However, the day came when no one hired Sadko to play.

It was the same for the next three days and, sighing unhappily, he took his balalaika and went to Lake Ulmen, just outside the city. There he sat and played to himself all day. At dusk, the waters of the lake began to swirl and foam and Sadko, terrified, turned and ran back to Novgorod.

Next day, again, he sat by Lake Ulmen and played his balalaika and again, at sunset, the water roared and foamed

and Sadko rushed back to Novgorod.

On the third day, when the water grew dark and began to churn into great waves, Sadko played on. Then, to his amazement, out of the waves the figure of the King of the Blue Seas appeared.

"I have come to thank you, Sadko," he roared. "I have been holding a feast and your music, for the past three days, has charmed and delighted us. Return home now and you will at once be invited to play at the feast of a great merchant.

Many other rich merchants and nobles will be there and you will hear them all boasting about their wonderful possessions.

"You, Sadko, must boast, 'I have no possessions, but I know that in Lake Ulmen there are fish of pure gold.' Wager your head on it, as you have nothing else to wager, and they will wager their shops, with all the precious wares they contain, in the market-place. Then, take a silken net, come down here and cast it three times into the lake."



With that, the king disappeared beneath the water and Sadko, greatly surprised returned home.

Immediately, he was asked to play at the feast of a rich merchant. He accepted and everything happened as the King of the Blue Seas had said. Sadko's wager was accepted and he led the merchants down to the lake. Three times he cast his silk net into the water and each time he drew up a golden fish. The astonished merchants had to hand over their shops and goods.

Now Sadko held great feasts and he soon became as boastful as the others. One day he boasted that he could buy up all the goods in Novgorod for a whole month, so great was his wealth. If he lost, he would pay the city of Novgorod thirty thousand roubles.

For the first few days, his servants bought up everything for sale, but always more was brought from the cities around and Sadko realised that he was frittering away his wealth needlessly, so he paid the city thirty thousand roubles, took all the goods he had bought and sailed away, to sell them in lands across the sea.

He was so successful that he sailed back to Russia, his ships laden with gold and silver and pearls. All was fine until a great storm blew up.

"We have journeyed far and have paid the King of the Blue Seas no tribute," said Sadko, so they threw gold and silver overboard, but still the storm continued.

"It is not gold or silver, but one of us the king wants," said Sadko at last, so each man wrote his name on a tablet of lead and threw it overboard. All of them floated but Sadko's. That sank to the bottom, so Sadko took his balalaika and made his men put him overboard, clinging to an oak plank.

He sank to the bottom of the sea and there was the King of the Blue Seas, waiting to welcome him. "I am glad you have come to pay tribute," said the king. "Play for me to dance."

Sadko played and the king and his court danced. As the dancing grew livelier the whole ocean shook and the ships were dashed by great waves.

As Sadko played an old man crept up to him and whispered in his ear, "If you wish to escape and return to your home,

I can help you."

"Please tell me how," said Sadko.

"The king will offer you a lovely princess as your bride," said the old man. "Do not refuse or you will anger him but do not kiss her, or even touch her, or you will never escape. Then break the strings of your balalaika and tell the king you must return home for some more."

Sadko did as the old man told him. He pretended to be delighted with the lovely princess whom the king offered as his bride, but he told the king that he was sad, for the strings of his balalaika had broken and he must return home for some more, before

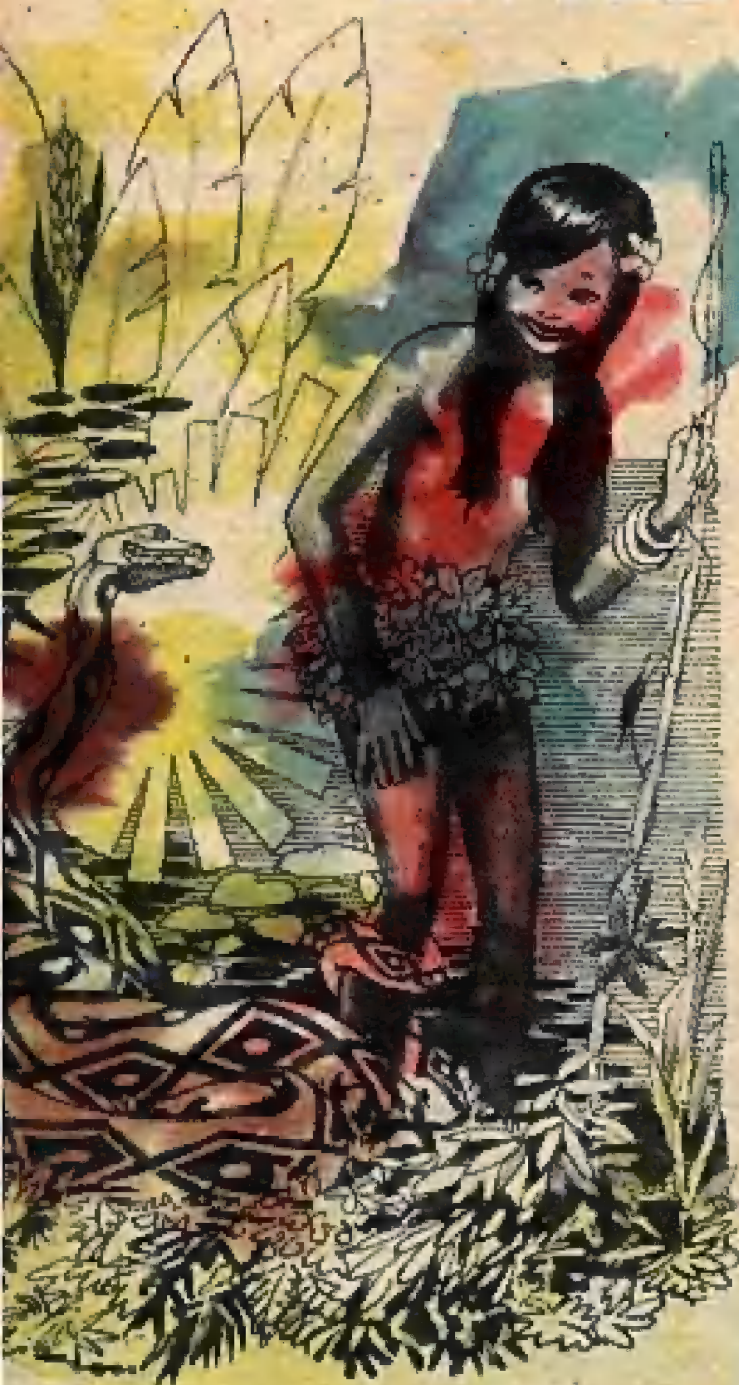
the wedding, so that he could serenade his bride.

That night, when he went to bed, he fell at once into a deep sleep and when he awoke he was lying on the outskirts of Novgorod. Sailing up the river towards him came his ships. The sailors rejoiced to see him for they had left him in the middle of the ocean and they thought that he had been drowned in the storm. They sailed together into the city, where they unloaded the ships and found that Sadko was far richer than when he went away.

Sadko, however, was content now to stay at home and he never again sailed out on to the blue sea in search of wealth or adventure.



THE KIND LITTLE SISTER



Once upon a time on a tropical island in the Pacific Ocean, there lived three sisters. One day they decided to go fishing and taking some taro, the root of a plant that can be eaten, in case they felt hungry, they set off along a forest path in single file.

By and by, the eldest sister, who was some way ahead of the others, came across a snake that was lying on the path. The snake raised its head and said, "I am very hungry. Will you chew a little of the taro in your hand, so that I can eat it?"

"Certainly not," replied the girl. "My food is not for anything as nasty as a snake," and so saying she walked away.

Presently, the second sister came to where the snake was lying across the path. The snake raised its head and said, "Would you chew a little of the taro root you are holding and give it to me, for I am very hungry?"

The snake raised its head and said, "Do not be afraid."

"I will do no such thing," replied the girl. "This food is mine and I have no intention of sharing it with anybody else, especially a snake."

It was not long before the third and youngest sister came skipping down the path.

The snake raised its head and said, "Do not be afraid of me. I only wish to eat some of the taro you are holding in your hand. Perhaps you could chew some of it for me."

"You can certainly share some of my taro with me," replied the girl.

She sat down beside the snake and chewed the root until it was soft enough for the snake to eat. When it had finished eating she asked if it would like some more. "No thank you," replied the snake. "I am no longer hungry, but tell me, where were you going to when I stopped you?"

"I was going to the river to fish", replied the young girl.

"Well, here is a piece of advice that you would be wise to listen to," said the snake. "When you hear the noise of thunder once in the heavens, you can fish, but if you hear the noise of thunder twice, then climb the nearest hill as fast as



you can."

There was no sign of her sisters when the young girl reached the river, so she settled down on the bank and cast out her fishing line. Suddenly, she heard a roll of thunder and she remembered what the snake had told her. She carried on fishing,

but suddenly there was a second roll of thunder and the sky became very dark. Within a few minutes the rain was pouring down and the water was rapidly rising in the river. Remembering the snake's words the girl picked up her basket of fish and hurried to the nearest hill.

As she looked down on the forest around her she saw great trees being swept away by floods of water and all the animals rushing for shelter.

When the storm had finished and the flood water had drained away she ran down the hill and into the forest, calling her sisters' names as she went. She had not gone far when the snake which had spoken to her,

slithered out of the undergrowth.

"Well, where are your sisters?" it said.

"I do not know," replied the girl, with tears in her eyes, "perhaps they have been swept out to sea by the great flood."

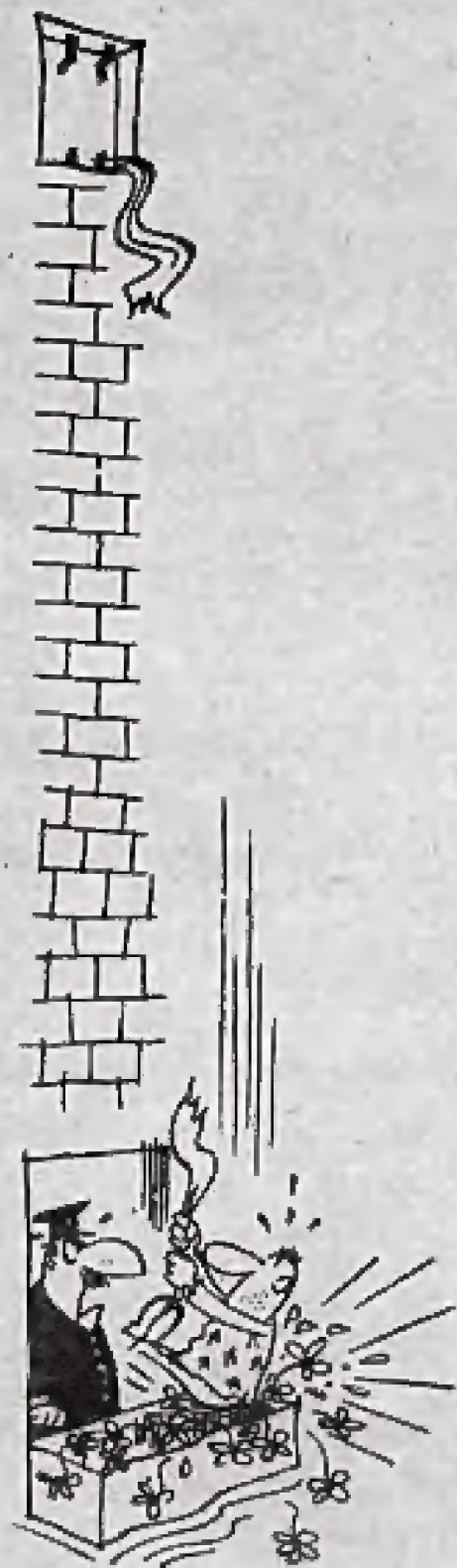
"No doubt they have," said the snake, "but if only they had been kind to me when I begged for food perhaps they would be here now."

To thank the snake for warning her, the little girl took two of the largest fish from her basket and gave them to the snake. Gripping the bundle in its mouth it slithered back into the undergrowth and disappeared.

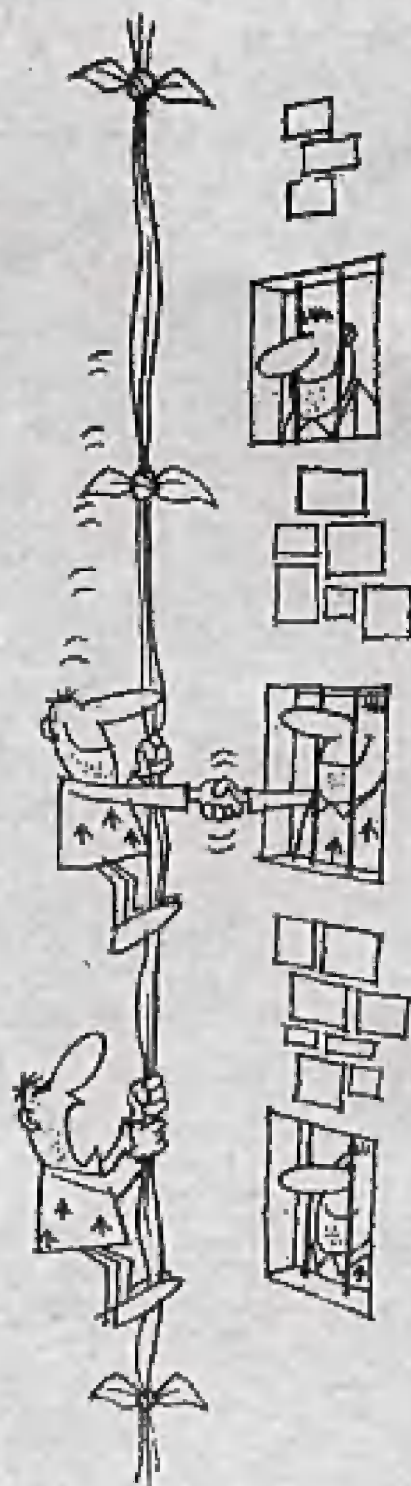
WHAT IS EDELWEISS?

This is a Swiss alpine plant which is equally at home in English rock gardens. Shaped like a small rosette, it has narrow leaves covered with long, silky-white hairs. The edelweiss is really a herb that flowers every year and is a member of the aster family. The flowers of this plant are white. Its name, Edelweiss, means noble-white.





"This time it's serious, Higgins
—you've ruined my window box!"



"If you're going to say goodbye to
all your friends on the way, we'll
never get out!"

THE MISTLETOE AND THE SUN-GOD

This is one of the tales of the gods who lived far above the world, in Asgard, which was told by the Norsemen, the people who lived in Scandinavia over a thousand years ago.

Of all the gods who lived in Asgard, there was none more gay and happy than Balder, the young and handsome sun-god.

Balder had a twin brother, whose name was Hod. He was the god of darkness and he was not gay like his brother, for he was blind. Hod was always sad, for he could not see to join in the sport and adventures of the others and he was very lonely, for the others often forgot about him.

However, there came a time when Balder was no longer happy and carefree. He grew pale and sad and ceased to join in the merry sports of the others. His wife asked him what was troubling him and Balder replied that he had a strange dream which came again and again and which he could not forget,

for it distressed him so much. In the dream he was killed, but he never knew who killed him. He knew only that the gods could do nothing to save him from his fate.

Balder's wife went at once to Odin and Frigg, the king and queen of the gods and told them what Balder had said. Odin and Frigg, who were also Balder's parents, called a great council of all the gods and goddesses, to discuss what should be done to protect Balder.

Before the council met, Odin went up to his watch-tower and sat on the great throne from which he could look down and see all things and he saw that in the underworld, the home of the dead, the great hall had been swept and the tables set

with cups as if for a feast. It was clear to him that in the underworld they were preparing to receive an honoured guest and it was with a heavy heart that Odin made his way to the council.

The debate was a long one, for Balder was well loved and the gods wished to ensure his safety. It was finally decided that he would only be completely safe if all things, fire, water, trees, plants, rocks, the earth and its metals, birds and animals, sickness and plagues, promised not to harm him, so Frigg sent her messengers to all of them and each one in turn promised that no harm should come to her son.

When they were sure that nothing had been left out, they returned to the other gods once more and the gods were happy again, for they were sure now that Balder could not be hurt. It became a great sport to hurl sticks and stones and sharp weapons at Balder, for they would only glance off him and none would harm him.

Only Løki was unhappy. Løki, the red-haired god of fire was jealous of the bright and beautiful sun-god, Balder, for the sun is always brighter and



The gods all met to discuss what should be done to protect Balder.

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at last he came
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"Here, take this dart and I will guide your aim," said Loki.



better-loved than fire. Always Lōki sought to harm Balder, but all things had given Frigg their promise and he never succeeded.

At last, angry at his failure, Loki set out disguised as an old woman.

She looked and felt something different from the others, asking questions until she found a tiny mistletoe growing around the base of the oak tree. One of the gods, Val-

halla. Only the mistletoe had not given its promise not to hurt Balder, for it seemed such a weak little thing that it could do no harm and no-one had bothered to ask it.

When Loki found this out, he cut a little branch of the mistletoe and made it into a sharp-pointed dart. Then he went to find the rest of the gods, who were busy playing their favourite game, throwing weapons at Balder while he stood there, laughing and unharmed.

Only Hod, Balder's blind

brother, waited lonely and forgotten at one side. Loki went across to him. "Why do you not join the others in their fun?" he asked.

"How can I?" asked Hod. "It is always dark where I am, for I am blind and I cannot even see the sun."

"I will help you to join in," replied Loki. "Here, take this dart and I will guide your aim".

"You are kind," smiled Hod. "I am always lonely because I can never join the others in their games."

He took the dart and aimed

it at Balder, guided by Loki. Then he threw it and the little dart pierced Balder through the heart, so that he fell dead.

The gods were silent when they saw what had happened and Loki stole away quickly, while Hod, afraid that the gods would take revenge on him, went and hid away, deep in the forest where no-one could find him.

Balder was given a great funeral. His body was put on his ship, surrounded by his weapons, as was the custom. Then it was surrounded by pine logs, which were set alight and as the



As the flames blazed up, the ship moved slowly away on its journey to the underworld.



The messengers asked the giant woman to weep for Balder, but she only laughed.

flames blazed up, the ship moved slowly out to sea, on its journey to the underworld. With it went Balder's wife, for she could not bear to be separated from him.

Asgard, the home of the gods, was sad and cheerless now that Balder was gone and finally Hermod, the messenger of the gods, offered to go to Hel, who ruled the underworld and ask what ransom she would take, so that Balder might return.

The gods gladly agreed that he should go, so for nine days and nights Hermod rode until he finally reached the place of Hel.

It was dark and silent in the courtyard when he dismounted and he went at once into the great hall. There on her throne sat Hel and beside her were Balder the sun-god and his wife.

Hermod told Hel the gods' request, and Hel agreed to let Balder go, if he was so well-loved that all things wept for him.

Hermod returned to Asgard at once and told the gods what Hel had said and Frigg sent her messengers to ask all things to weep for Balder's return. All things agreed, for they all loved

Balder. The gods, the giants who lived far away in the land of ice and snow, the elves and dwarfs beneath the earth, the rocks, the trees and plants, the birds and animals, all wept for Balder.

The messengers returned to Asgard to tell the gods that all things were weeping, but on the way they passed a cave in which a giant woman was sitting. They stopped and asked her to weep for Balder, but she only laughed. "I did not love Balder," she replied. "Let Hel keep him" and she only laughed louder.

The messengers returned to Asgard with great sadness and

told Frigg how only the giant woman, whom they had never seen before, had refused to weep for Balder. They told Frigg also how her laugh had sounded like the laugh of Loki, who was skilful at changing his shape and had no love for Balder.

There was great grief in Asgard for now Balder could never return and no-one sorrowed more than his twin brother, Hod. Soon afterwards, however, Hod, too, was killed and he went down to join his brother in the house of Hel, where Balder greeted him with great love and kindness.



"George—you've done it!! You're airborne!!"

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST

Here is your opportunity to win a cash prize!
Winning captions will be announced in the August issue



- ★ These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions? Could be single words, or several words, but the two captions must be related to each other.
- ★ Prize of Rs. 20 will be awarded for the best double caption. Remember, entries must be received by the 30th June.
- ★ Your entry should be written on a postcard, giving your full name and address, together with age and sent to:

Photo Caption Contest,
Chandamama Magazine,
Madras-26.

Result of Photo Caption Contest in April Issue

The prize is awarded to
Mrs. P. Ernest
35, Meenakshi Avenue
Bangalore-42.

Winning Entry—'People's Pleasure'—'Nature's Treasure'



MAHABHARATA

The story so far:

The stipulated period of twelve years of exile was drawing to a close, and although the Pandava princes had suffered many privations and hardships, Yudhishtira, the eldest of the princes, remained steadfast that the day would come when they would regain their rightful inheritance. King Dhritarashtra realised only too well, that the future boded ill for the Kuru race, but his eldest son Duryodhana, riddled with envy and greed, planned to destroy the Pandava princes.

Duryodhana, with his uncle Sakuni and Karna, at the head of a great army, went to the

forest to mock the Pandavas. But Duryodhana incited the Gandharvas and in the battle that followed, Duryodhana was captured by Chitrasena, the king of the Gandharvas. Later at the bequest of Yudhishtira, Duryodhana was released from bondage and returned to Hastinapura more embittered than ever.

One day the sage Durvasa went to Hastinapura with his ten thousand disciples. Knowing the sage's ungovernable temper, Duryodhana saw to it that the sage and all his followers were given the most lavish hospitality. The sage was gratified and told Duryodhana he could ask for any boon. Duryodhana knowing the



**King Jayadratha accosts
Draupadi at the hermitage**

Pandavas had little food in their hermitage, begged the irritable sage to go with all his disciples and visit the Pandavas.

The sage Durvasa and his disciples arrived at the hermitage of the Pandavas late at night, and immediately demanded they be given food. Draupadi was horrified for they had insufficient food to feed even one person, and she prayed to Sri Krishna to come to her aid in this hopeless predicament.

It will be remembered that early in their exile, the Sun god had bestowed on Yudhishtira the Akshayapatra, a wonder-

ful vessel which held a never ending supply of food for their daily consumption. Now it was night time and the vessel was empty. But as Draupadi prayed, Sri Krishna appeared before her and in a solemn tone said. "I am hungry, bring me food at once."

Draupadi was in despair at such a request. "How can I offer you food when the vessel given by the Sun god is empty until tomorrow? The sage Durvasa and all his disciples are here demanding food. What shall I do?"

Sri Krishna merely smiled and said. "I am hungry, so bring the vessel here and let me see what it contains."

Draupadi in great confusion, brought the vessel and there at the bottom of the vessel was a single grain of rice and a tiny bit of cooked vegetable, which Sri Krishna ate with seeming satisfaction.

After eating these solitary scraps, Sri Krishna turned to Draupadi and said. "I have eaten well. Now tell Bhima to go to the sage and say that food is ready and waiting for them."

Both Draupadi and Bhima were puzzled but having faith

in Krishna, Bhima went and told the sage that food had been prepared. To Bhima's astonishment the sage cheerfully said. "We already feel well-fed and cannot eat any more. Tell Yudhishtira to forgive us." Soon afterwards the sage and his disciples departed.

Some months after this, Yudhishtira and his brothers planned a hunting trip, but before setting out they arranged for Draupadi and their priest Dhaumya to stay with the sage Trinabindu in his hermitage.

Here, Draupadi should have been perfectly safe. But one morning Jayadratha, king of the Sindhu country and an ally of Duryodhana, was passing the hermitage with a strong escort, when he saw Draupadi walking in the grounds. Thinking here is a golden opportunity to win favours from Duryodhana, Jayadratha decided to abduct Draupadi and hold her as a hostage.

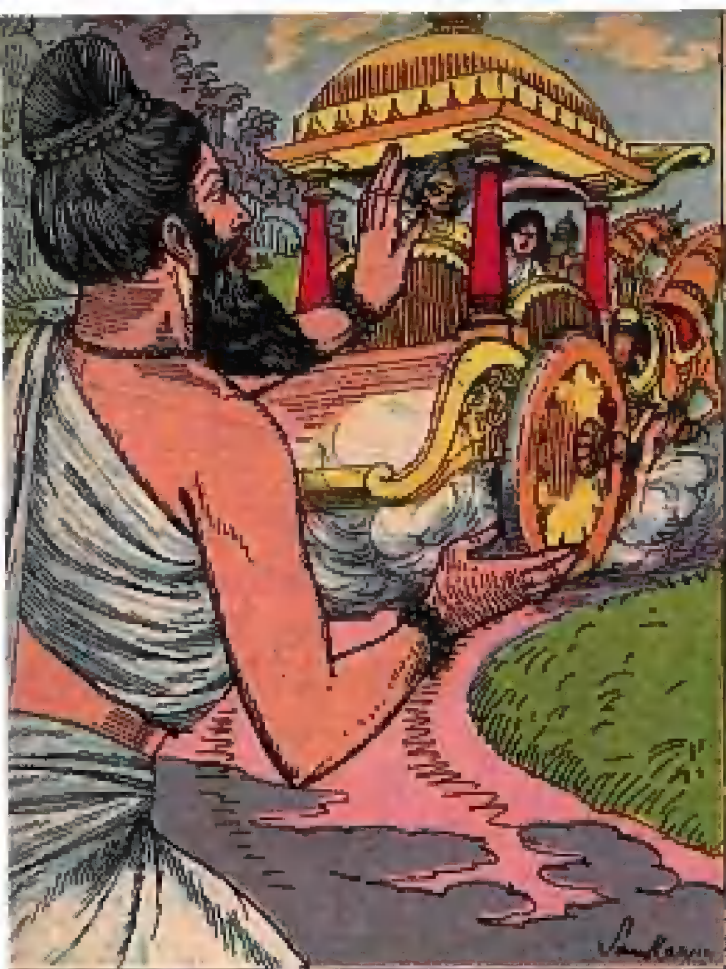
At the sight of Jayadratha's repellant figure, Draupadi tried to run away, but Jayadratha soon caught her and brutally dragged the screaming queen to his chariot. Dhaumya the priest,

hearing Draupadi's cries for help rushed out and tried in vain to stop the chariot.

Soon afterwards, Yudhishtira and his brothers returned from their hunting trip and when Dhaumya tearfully explained that Draupadi had been kidnapped, they set off in pursuit of Jayadratha, who thinking that the Pandavas would never dare attack his strong force, camped close by, eager to torment Draupadi with threats to hand her over to Duryodhana and his brothers.

Without warning the enraged Pandavas rushed into Jayadratha's camp, and Bhima with his





great mace and Arjuna armed with the Gandiva bow, created terrible havoc and the remnants of Jayadratha's men fled in horror. As soon as Draupadi was released, Bhima and Arjuna prepared to chase after the fleeing Jayadratha. Yudhishtira laid a restraining arm on Bhima's shoulder. "By all means capture the miscreant," he said firmly. "But remember he is a relative of the Kaurava Queen Gandhari, so let no harm befall him."

Jayadratha, scared out of his wits at the thought of the fury of Bhima and his mace, hastened from the field of battle, leaving his men to fend for

themselves. But in his maddened haste a wheel of his chariot struck a boulder on the side of the road. The chariot overturned, and although Jayadratha was not badly hurt, he was far too sore and bruised to continue his escape on foot, and was soon captured by Bhima and Arjuna.

The luckless man grovelled at the feet of Arjuna and begged for mercy. Bhima stood at one side and roared with laughter at the sight of this cringing monarch. Taking Jayadratha by the scruff of his neck, Bhima ordered his men to cut off the captive's hair, leaving several tufts to remind the once proud monarch of his abject disgrace.

Afterwards Jayadratha was taken back to the hermitage. Yudhishtira had to smile at the comical appearance of the prisoner with his shaven head adorned by its odd tufts of hair, but remembering the treatment Draupadi had received at the hands of this uncouth rogue, Yudhishtira in a voice filled with scorn, upbraided Jayadratha for daring to molest Draupadi, and threatened him with death if ever he offended the Pandavas again.



CHANDAMAMA

SHORT STORY CONTEST

Rs. 350 IN PRIZES

There must be a number of budding authors in India, and we would like to find them. Hence this competition. Your story can be on any subject, and anything from 500 to 2000 words, but it must be original.

FIRST PRIZE Rs. 200

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- Manuscripts can be hand written or typed.
- All entries will be judged by a literary panel whose decision will be final and no correspondence can be entered into.
- Prize winning manuscripts become the sole property of Chandamama Magazines and no manuscripts will be returned unless accompanied by a suitably stamped envelope.
- All entries must reach the Editor, Chandamama Magazines by the 15th September 1972.
- The results of this competition will be published in the January 1973 issue.

**REMEMBER, POST YOUR ENTRY TO THE EDITOR
CHANDAMAMA MAGAZINES, MADRAS-26.**

The incredible story of the Thugs whose criminal activities brought death to countless innocent people.

THE DECEIVERS

In the second half of the 18th century, after Britain had gained a strong foothold in India, there arose the first suspicions that something dreadful was afoot. Various reports showed that each year large numbers of travellers vanished without trace on the lonely Indian roads.

In itself, there was nothing especially remarkable about that. The country was large and sprawling, authority was lax, bandits were only to be expected and violence was common enough in any country in those days.

But one young Englishman wanted to know more. Phillip Meadows Taylor, an assistant superintendent of police, decided to probe more deeply into the matter. Quite likely his first intention was just to compile statistics of missing persons in the area he helped administrate. So gradually he pieced together a rough picture of the comings

and goings in his area; and darkening that picture was one inexplicable shadow.

Every year bands of men left their homes on what were described as trading ventures. After



Superintendent Taylor was dismissed from his post

a number of months they would return and carry on with their previous occupations. But there was never any way of finding out where they had been or any records of their transactions in other parts of the country. In the meantime, many other bands of travellers vanished completely.

Terrible suspicions began to grow in Taylor's mind and his investigations became more deeply probing—until he was told that his services as a police officer were no longer required in that area. Frantically he protested that he was near exposing something unparalleled in the history of crime, and received only the explanation that the Indian prince who ruled that area had asked specifically for his removal and could not be denied.

To Taylor it seemed that if there was some dreadful criminal conspiracy, its leaders had friends in high places. He was right.

When the travellers had been lulled into accepting them as friends, the Thugs whipped out silken handkerchiefs, which they swiftly snaked around the necks of their victims.





However, even as the frustrated Taylor was removed from his post, another British officer named William Sleeman was pursuing a similar line of thought some many hundreds of miles away. Sleeman had reached the same conclusions as Taylor and was systematically examining every piece of information that might lead him to conclusive proof.

Unlike Taylor, he had a positive lead to follow—an article by a Dr. Richard Sherwood entitled *Of The Murderers Called Phansigars*.

As India was opened up, there were published lots of colourful and extravagant stories, many of which could be taken with the proverbial pinch of salt; and Sherwood's account of a sect of ritual killers who preyed on travellers might just have been dismissed as one of the more fanciful tales.

The Phansigars, or stranglers, wrote Sherwood, took their name from a Hindu word, meaning noose though in the north of India they were known as *Thugs*, meaning deceivers.

From early childhood they were brought up with the religious belief that the goddess Bhowani, also known as Kali

the Black One, demanded lives of travellers as her sacrifice. In return, she granted success in the world—a part of the success being the property of the victims—and immunity from capture.

Roaming the lonely Indian roads in bands of up to 50 men, and occasionally more, the Thugs sent scouts ahead of them to find groups of wealthy travellers whose confidence they tried to win.

This accomplished, the travellers would be joined by the main band of Thugs who began polite and friendly conversation until the codewords were given.

"Bring firewood," their leader would say. That meant "take up your positions," and two or three Thugs would saunter casually behind their seated victim. "Let us eat betel nuts," would say the leader. That meant "kill them."

With incredible speed, the men whipped silken handkerchiefs from their waists. Weighted at one end with a rupee, these *rumals* snaked swiftly, round the victims' necks, were pulled tight and the men quickly "despatched."

In the vast stretches of India, where trading expeditions might



Sleeman was able to learn a great deal about the evil methods of the Thugs.

take up to two years, it was small wonder that the Thugs went undetected. After two years, detection would be impossible. Then, too, who was to say that an unreturned traveller had not died of disease, been bitten by a cobra or fallen prey to bandits on his journey?

William Sleeman felt that the Thugs did exist, and he was

determined to expose them and stamp out their cult.

How he did so is an impressive story of patience and perseverance, ingenuity and insight. Managing to build up a network of informers and infiltrators, he struck at the Thugs from inside their organisation, gradually learning their language, their codes, the usual

scene of their crimes, their deadly habit patterns and so on.

He learned the myths on which their cult was based; and and that they may have been descended from the Persian armies of Xerxes, that they may have ridden with the early Mongol hordes and that they probably came to India with the Moslem invaders.

Above all, the Thugs were a secret society, they had developed a sort of split mind which enabled them to live as respectable citizens for most of the time and they could see no wrong in what they did. Killing was their time-honoured right and religion.

Strangely enough, it was their sense of religion that contributed most to their downfall.

Certain people were tabooed as victims — wandering holy men, women, certain classes of merchants and Europeans — and the Thugs believed fervently that if they broke these taboos, their goddess Kali would declare them sinners and have them caught. Some of the Thugs did break these taboos, and one of them was caught while mortified with guilt

Believing the wrath of Kali had descended upon him, he confessed everything, implicated others, and they in turn reasoned that their betrayal was willed by Kali because of the sins of their brothers. By the mid-19th century, the cult of Thuggee had been undermined by its own passive fatalism.

As more and more were brought to trial, the incredulous British felt a sense not so much of horror but of awe and even admiration. They almost found it difficult to dislike the Thugs, for, apart from their misguided purpose, they were brave, courteous, intelligent and had a great sense of honour. Many were even described as gentle; and those who were condemned to death amazed everyone by the dignity with which they took their punishment.

Sleeman founded schools to re-educate them; and though some of the older members despised these, most Thugs re-applied themselves well. They proved particularly skilful at weaving. In fact, in the Waterloo Chamber at Windsor Castle, there can be seen a magnificent carpet woven for Queen Victoria by the Thugs.

SPORTS
Tennis



SPORTS
Tennis



SPORTS
Tennis



SPORTS
Tennis



SPORTS

Tennis

WOMEN have played lawn tennis right from the beginning and the picture on the other side of this index card shows some early women tennis players. They are playing a doubles game in the dress of the period the year 1874.

The first official championship for women in the United States was at the Philadelphia Cricket club in 1889. It was won by a Miss Bertha Townsend.

The girls wore thin dresses with leg of mutton sleeves and sailor hats. The dresses just cleared the ground.

Early lawn tennis was usually played on grass courts, although this was not the intention of its originator, Major Walter Clopton Wingfield. He thought that in cold weather, the game could be played on ice with the players wearing ice skates. Such a game certainly presents an interesting picture.

SPORTS

Tennis

THE Davis Cup is not, in fact, a cup at all. It is a bowl, made of silver. It is won annually by men playing tennis on behalf of their country.

The idea of the Davis Cup was conceived by an American called Dwight Davis. In 1899—while he was a student at Harvard—he played exhibition matches in British Columbia and California.

He then persuaded his father to present a trophy in order to bring about good natured rivalry between Great Britain and the U.S.A. The first match was in 1900 and only the U.S.A. and Great Britain took part.

The picture on the other side of this index card shows the successful American Davis Cup team of 1900. From left to right, they are M. D. Whitman, Dwight Davis and H. Ward.

SPORTS

Tennis

AT first women always served underhand and, for many years, the standard of both men's and women's tennis was higher in England than in the United States.

In 1904, however, a 17 year-old Californian girl called May Sutton arrived on the tennis scene. She won the American title in that year and in 1905 beat Miss D. K. Douglass (later Mrs. Lambert Chambers) at Wimbledon. As a result, she became the first American ever to win an English title. She even managed to reach the quarter-finals of the women's singles 22 years later, when she was 39.

Perhaps the greatest French woman tennis star was Suzanne Lenglen. In 1925, she lost only five games in the whole tournament. She also beat the holder in the semi-finals without losing a game.

SPORTS

Tennis

THE All-England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club originally occupied a site in Worple Road, Wimbledon. In 1922, however, it was judged to be too small to accommodate the large number of people who wished to attend and the new premises (still in Wimbledon) were opened by King George V.

The Centre Court at Wimbledon is justifiably famous, since it has seen many remarkable players in action.

It was damaged during the Second World War when no championships took place but, in 1945, men from the allied forces played on Court I, the second most important court at Wimbledon.

The picture on the other side of this index card shows the Centre Court at Wimbledon.

A story of the Red Indians of America



HOW THE REDSKINS WERE MADE

Once upon a time, when the world had just been created and was covered with very beautiful mountains, valleys and rivers, there was not one man or woman living on it.

One morning, Manitu, the god whom the Red Indians worshipped, woke up in a happy mood and looking down on the



world decided it was time to put some people on it. He fetched a handful of clay from a river and made the figure of a man, taking great care to mould and shape it correctly and to his liking. At last it was finished and all that remained to be done was the baking, so that the clay would become hard and strong. He put the clay figure into an oven and stocked up the fire with wood, until it was blazing away.

Manitu sat down in the shade of a tree, to rest, for the day was very hot and he was tired after his morning's work. Soon, he had nodded off to sleep and it was not until many hours later that he was wakened by a smell of burning. Remembering his little clay figure in the oven, the god jumped up and ran to rescue it. When he opened the oven door it was too late, for the figure had turned black as soot.

"Never mind," thought

Manitu, "this will be a race of black people," and he put the figure down on the world.

The next day Manitu made a second clay figure, but this time he paid more attention to the baking. However, now perhaps through being afraid of overcooking it, he took the figure out of the oven long before it was done and this time the clay was hardly baked and the figure was pale and white. "Ah well, never mind, this will be a white race of people," said the god Manitu to himself and he put the figure down on the world.

The following day Manitu made yet another clay figure and this time he covered it with oil, so that even if he left it in the oven for quite a long time it would not burn, but alas, this idea was not successful and to Manitu's dismay the clay only turned a yellow colour, not quite brown and not quite white. "Never mind, the third race shall be yellow," he said to himself.

When Manitu awoke on the fourth day he made a fourth clay figure. Now he knew just what to do. He put the right amount of wood on the oven fire, covered his new clay figure

IN NEXT ISSUE

THE FALL OF AN EMPIRE

*The seige and conquest of
the great Ottoman strong-
hold in the 15th century.*

in the right amount of oil and, by peeping into the oven, saw how the baking was coming along. After all these careful preparations Manitu lifted the perfect figure of a man from the oven. His colour was a wonderful red-brown.

"Here is the red race of people!" exclaimed Manitu. "The best figure that I have managed to produce," and he set it down on the Earth with all the other races where it became known as the Red Indian.

This story, according to Red Indian legend, is how the different races of people first came to live on the world.

"Here is the red race of people!" exclaimed Manitu.





The Sheriff of Nottingham was helping Prince John to take the throne of England. Robin Hood and his men were loyal to King Richard and were outlaws in Sherwood Forest. The Sheriff could not catch them.

Disguised as beggars, Robin Hood, Little John and Will Scarlet went to Nottingham Fair. Little John beat the Sheriff's champion wrestler, but was recognized by a Norman soldier.



Little John stood on the platform for all to see as the soldier shouted, "That man is one of Robin Hood's band". Robin called to Will Scarlet. "Quick, Will! We have got to help Little John escape" They leapt on to the platform.



The Sheriff was furiously angry with Little John because he had beaten the champion as well as being an outlaw. He called to his soldiers: "Seize that man. Don't let him escape." Little John was clearly in great danger.



But Robin Hood and Will Scarlet were there to help him. Standing side by side on the platform the three outlaws used their staves to good advantage and drove back the soldiers who tried to capture them. "Take that!" shouted Little John. "And that!" echoed Will Scarlet.



More and more soldiers came on the scene, and and Robin could see that soon they would be overpowered. He took a quick look round and saw his chance. "Make for that horse and cart." They drove the soldiers back, then leaped from the platform and ran for their lives towards the horse and cart.



Their sudden dash took the soldiers by surprise and Robin and his friends managed to get a good start. Bursting through the crowd at a gallop, the soldiers gave chase but they were soon left behind. "They will never catch us now," shouted Little John. But he spoke too soon. One of the wheels struck a tree stump and the cart overturned, throwing the three outlaws on the road.



Robin Hood landed on all fours in a ditch and although bruised he was glad that no bones were broken. But he knew the Sheriff wouldn't give up easily and soon his soldiers would be scouring the country for them, and they could expect no mercy.

Little John was already on his feet, but alas, Will Scarlet had fallen heavily and badly twisted his ankle. "Now we are in a fine pickle," said Little John. "Will cannot walk so we must find somewhere to hide until nightfall."

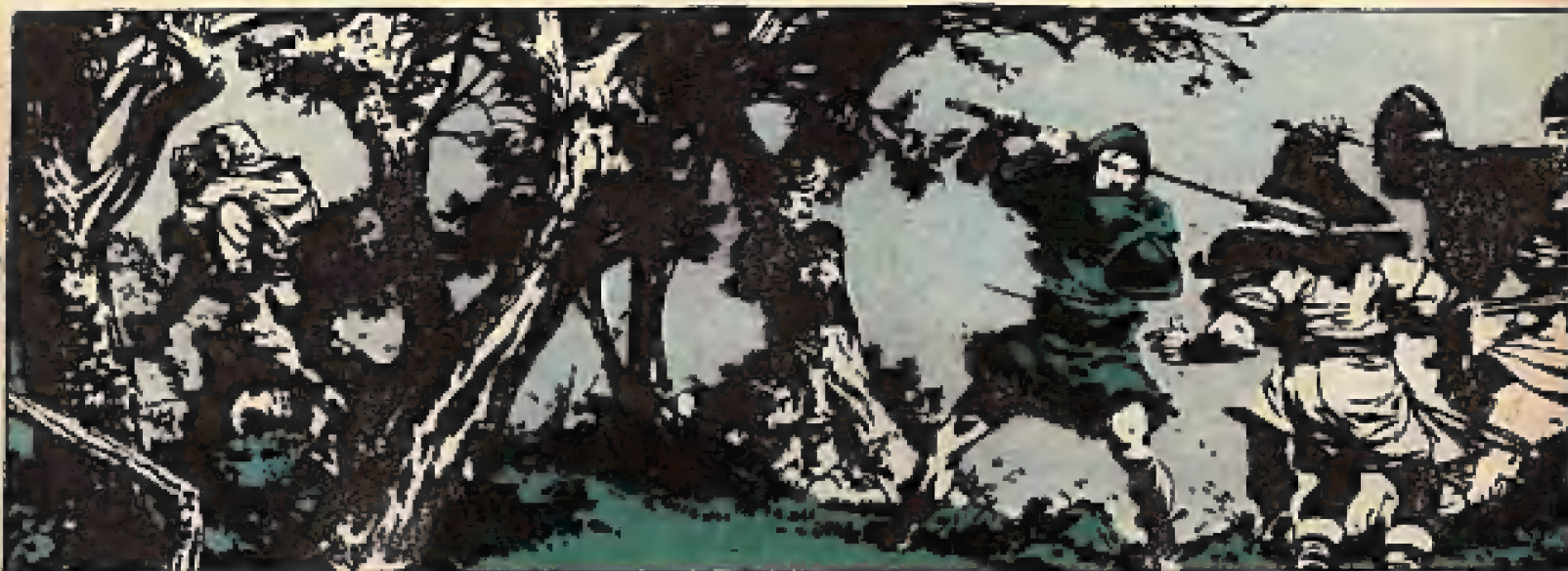


Robin peering round, could see the Sheriff's men in the distance and in this open country Robin knew that they would be lucky to avoid detection. "Hurry," he called to Little John. "If you can carry Will on your back, we may be able to reach the shelter of Sherwood Forest."

Little John, with his great strength, made light of having to carry Will Scarlet. "We are ready Robin," he said. Robin knowing their task was fairly hopeless, turned to Little John. "No matter what happens," he declared, "you are not to stop. If we are overtaken, I will keep the soldiers at bay."



They were nearing Sherwood Forest, when the Sheriff and his soldiers burst into view. "There they are," shouted the Sheriff. "Now they will soon be in our power" But Robin had different ideas, and whilst his two companions made good their escape, Robin, with his stout stave, claimed many victims.





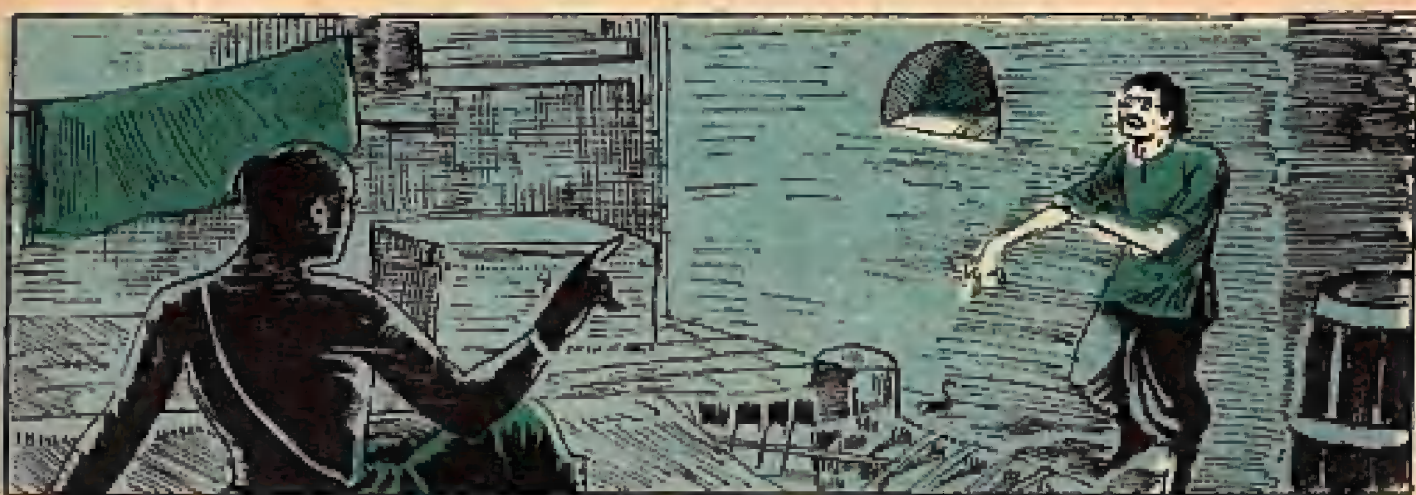
Then one soldier, braver than the rest, crept through the grass until he got behind Robin. Jumping to his feet the soldier dealt Robin a crushing blow on the back of the head. Robin fell to the ground as though dead, and the soldiers breathed a sigh of relief.

The Sheriff fairly danced with joy that at last this Robin Hood was in his hands. "We will show this rogue how we deal with outlaws," he exclaimed. "Tie him hand and foot and take him back to the castle." The Sheriff rubbed his hands with glee at the thought of the reward he would get from the Norman baron, Robert the Wolf.



In Sherwood Forest, Friar Tuck cried out in dismay when he saw Little John come stumbling through the trees with Will Scarlet on his back. "Where is Robin?" he asked, fearing the worst. Little John looked down cast. "Robin made us escape, but I fear he has been captured by the Sheriff and his soldiers."

ANOTHER EXCITING EPISODE IN NEXT ISSUE



A Stinging Remedy

Many years ago there lived in a small village, in the heart of India, a great scholar named Gowri Shankar. He loved the village where his father and grandfather had lived, and was well respected, both for his wisdom and readiness to help others in times of distress.

A close neighbour was Manilal, who was quite affluent, but money meant everything to Manilal and some of his methods to acquire more, were extremely sly. Yet the scholar and Manilal were good friends and Gowri Shankar always cherished the hope that one day his friend would mend his ways.

That year, in a nearby town, the wedding was celebrated of

a rich man's son and as Gowri Shankar had been the youth's tutor, he was invited to the wedding as a guest of honour. The rich man in a grateful frame of mind, presented the scholar with a silk shawl and a costly diamond ring.

Everyone in the village was delighted when they saw the scholar's gifts, except Manilal, who looked at the ring with greedy eyes, thinking why should a scholar who scorns riches, possess such a ring, when it would look so good on my hand. Sitting in Gowri Shankar's house that evening, Manilal could think of nothing but that sparkling ring and he watched every movement when the scholar picked up the ring

and put it in a small box on a shelf.

When they said goodnight, Manilal could not resist taking a backward glance at that box, and wended his way home filled with evil thoughts.

In the middle of the night, when all the village was wrapped in slumber, Manilal stole cautiously along the street and when he reached the scholar's house, he looked around to make sure he was not observed. Knowing that his friend never bolted his door, Manilal quietly lifted the latch and peering in the door, could just make out the figure of the scholar safe in bed asleep. Without a sound, Manilal tiptoed across the room and gently lifted the box off the shelf. Opening the box, Manilal felt inside for the ring. Suddenly he dropped the box and let out a great howl. "Help! Help!" he shouted. "I have been

bitten by a snake. I am dying."

The scholar who had only been feigning sleep, sat up and smiled at Manilal, who was hopping around holding his hand and screaming blue murder.

"You are not badly hurt," he said to Manilal. "It was only a scorpion I caught last night. But tell me, what are you doing here, and why are you taking that box?"

Manilal, now looking very crestfallen, had to confess that he intended to steal the diamond ring. The scholar said sharply. "I knew you planned to steal the ring, that is why I put the scorpion in the box. You have learned a good lesson, my friend."

From then onwards Manilal changed in character. He no longer had an insatiable greed for money, and found a greater enjoyment in the company of his friend, the scholar.



THE FAIRY BRIDE

Prince Ali had left the palace of his father, the Sultan, to search for his lost arrow. He and his two brothers had held a contest, the one who shot his arrow farthest winning as a bride their cousin, the lovely princess, but Prince Ali had shot his arrow so far that it could not be found at all, so the second brother, Prince Ahmed, was declared the winner.

Sadly, Prince Ali travelled on until he reached a sheer mountain, which towered above him, impassable, and there, in the grass, lay his arrow. "No man could shoot an arrow as far as this," said the prince in amazement. As he bent to pick it up, he saw that it pointed to a dark cave. Set in the rock was an iron door which opened at his touch and inside he saw a great palace and coming towards him a beautiful princess.

"I am the fairy princess Shalimar," she said. "I have

watched over you and your brothers and I sent the three wonderful gifts which you all took home from your travels. I carried away your arrow, for I wanted you to find riches and happiness here with me."

The delighted prince at once fell in love with the fairy princess and they were married and lived happily in the great palace. After a time, Prince Ali longed to see his father again, so the princess gave him a train of richly-dressed servants and he set off, but first she made him promise to say nothing of his marriage or where he lived.

The Sultan was so overjoyed to see the son whom he thought was dead that he did not question him about the secret of his marriage, but the viziers and palace officials were very curious and when they saw that each time the prince came he had more and more richly-dressed followers, they became

The Sultan ordered the Witch to follow the prince and see where he went.



very jealous and persuaded the Sultan that the prince meant to seize his throne. They urged the Sultan to find out where the prince's wealth came from, so the Sultan sent for a Witch and ordered her to follow the prince and see where he went.

The Witch did so and she saw the prince and his follo-

wers enter a cave and go through a door into the mountain but try as she could, she could not find the door for herself. Next time the prince visited his father, she dressed as an old beggar woman and lay groaning among the rocks near the entrance to the cave.

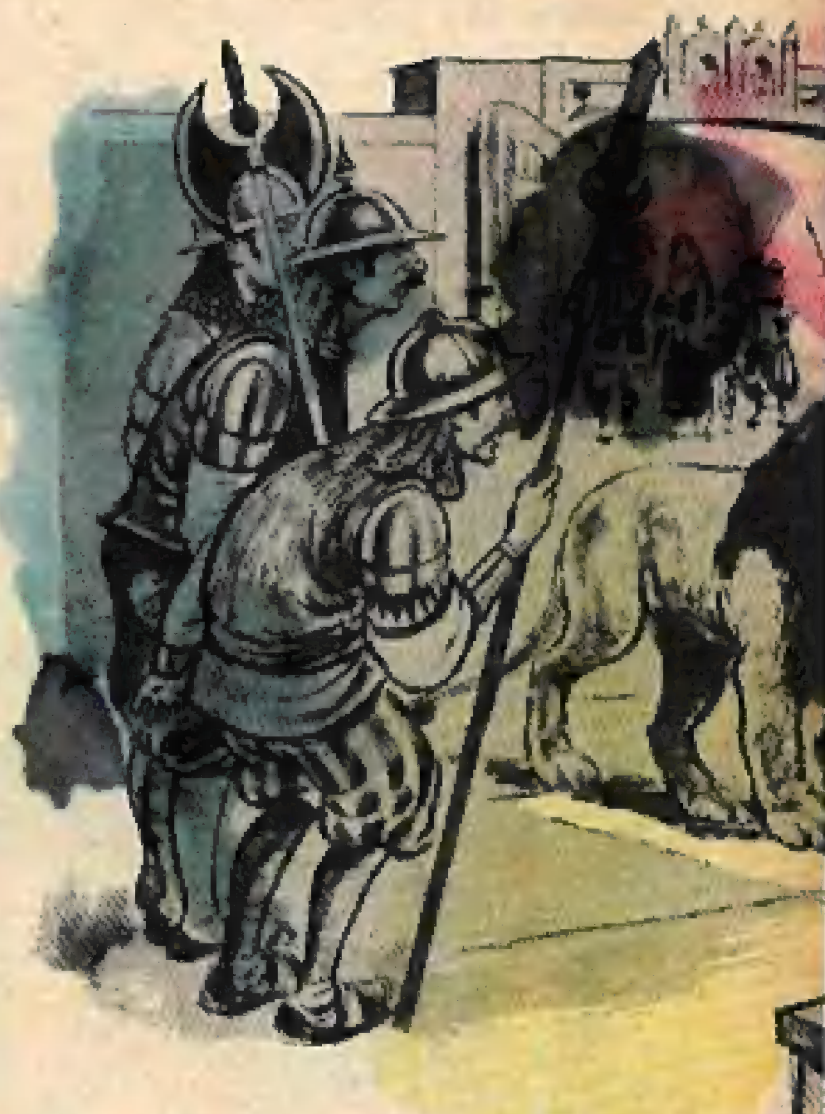
There the prince found her

on his return and thinking that she was ill, he ordered his men to carry her into the palace with them. When the princess saw the old woman she was at once suspicious, but she treated her kindly, looked after her and then had her servants take her back to the Sultan's city.

There, the Witch told the Sultan all that she had seen. "Your son is married to a powerful fairy," she said. "Do not imprison him, for she can quickly release him, but if you want to be rid of him, ask him for impossible gifts. Even a fairy's power is limited and when he cannot give you something you ask for, he will feel ashamed and will never visit you again."

The next time the prince came, the Sultan said to him, "My son, I hear you are married to a fairy. I wish to ask for three gifts and if she is a good fairy, she will be able to grant them. First I want a tent small enough to hold in my hand but big enough, when stretched out, to cover my whole army."

The prince went sadly back to the princess, sure that she could not perform such a task, but she at once gave the prince a tiny tent and told him to take



it to his father. When the Sultan stretched it out, it was big enough to cover his whole army.

"For my second gift I want a flask of the water from the Fountain of Lions which can cure all illness," said the Sultan.

The prince went back to the princess. "Take a sheep and divide it into four quarters," said the princess. "Then take a ball of thread and throw it in front of you. Follow it and



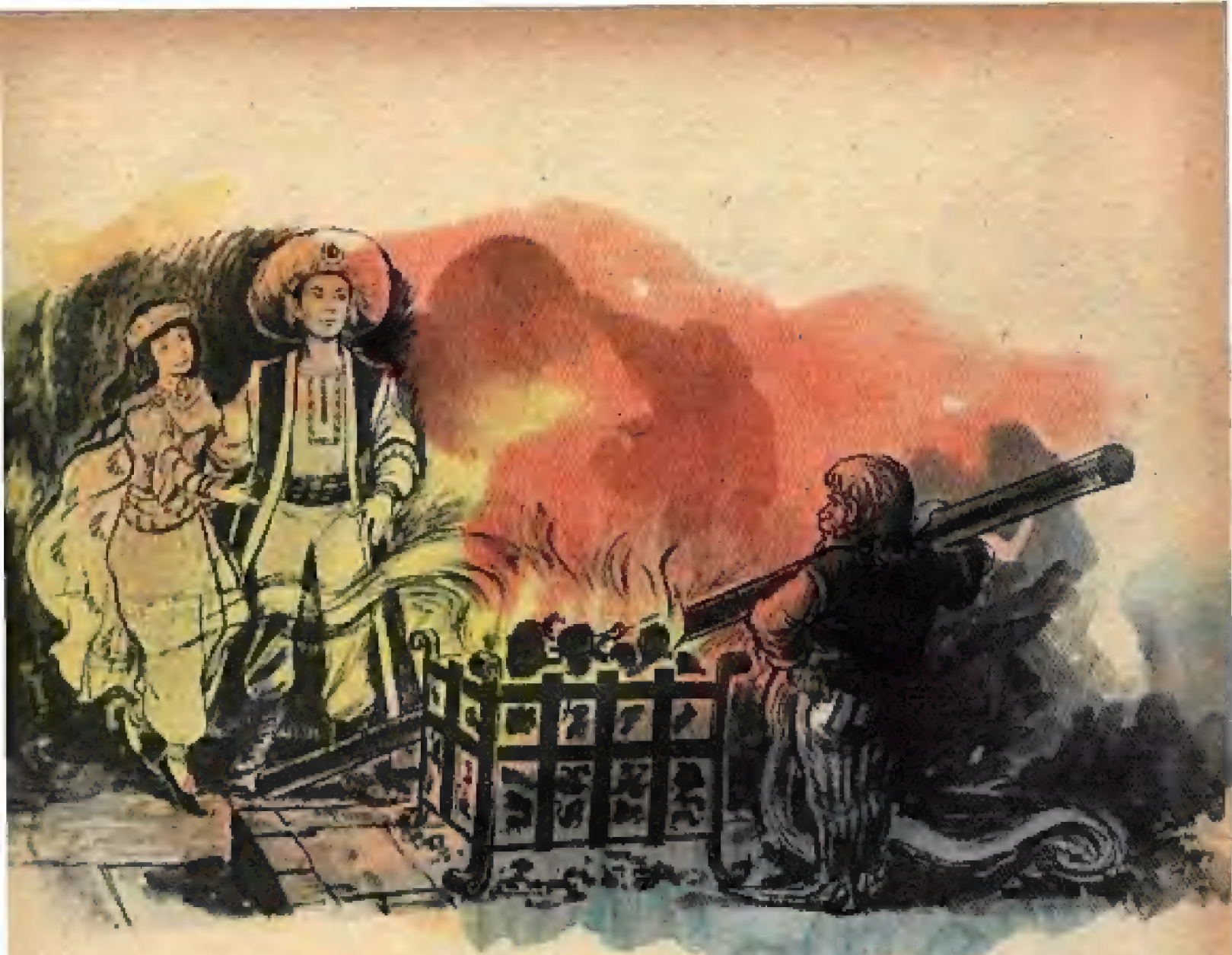
it will lead you to the Fountain of Lions. Guarding the fountain are four lions. Throw each one a quarter of the sheep and they will not bother you."

The prince did as his wife had told him. As he rode to his father's palace, two of the lions followed him. When they saw the flask handed to the Sultan and put in safe keeping, they returned to guard their well.

This time, the Witch and the

evil counsellors advised the Sultan to ask for a tiny man, eighteen inches high, who could carry on his shoulders a staff of iron weighing five hundred pounds.

The prince was sure this would be impossible, but the princess threw a sweet perfume on the fire and there before them stood a tiny man, with a huge iron bar. "This is my brother, Shaibar," said the fairy princess.



Prince Ali set out for the Sultan's palace with Shaibar and everyone who looked at them ran away in terror. Into the palace and right to the throne room they went. "You have sent for me, what is your will?" asked Shaibar, but the Sultan only hid his face in terror.

Shaibar was wild with fury. "You insult me and must be punished," he cried. "You have brought me all the way here only to ignore me." Then

he struck the Sultan a blow with his iron bar which killed him. He treated the jealous viziers the same and lastly, with one blow, he killed the Witch.

Then, he made everyone bow to Prince Ali and as they all, with the exception of the jealous viziers, loved him, they did so at once. The prince gave each of his brothers a province to rule over. Then he sent for the fairy princess to join him and they ruled the kingdom wisely and well for many years.

OUR COVER STORY

ST. GEORGE—the soldier who became a Saint

**Did England's patron saint really fight the dragon?
Was there a St. George at all . . . ?**

"Cry—God for Harry!
England! and Saint George!"
roared Henry V as he led his
soldiers through the breached
walls of Harfleur in Shakes-
peare's history of the king.

Saint George—the martyr and
protector of England—the
soldier saint is celebrated on
23rd April, Shakespeare's birth-
day.

The legends of St. George are
too numerous to relate in full
in one short article. The most
fanciful claims that he was born
in Coventry with a red cross
on his chest and travelled
around the land slaying dragons
by the dozen. The "official"
and more restrained legend is
nonetheless colourful and
exciting.

St. George was a wandering
knight in shining armour from
a Christian part of Asia Minor.

One day he was passing through
the African country of Libya,
which at that time was terrorised
by a fearsome dragon that dwelt
in an evil marsh. The local
men had set out to kill the
monster, but its breath was so
foul and poisonous that they
could not come near it. By day
and night the great creature
roamed the land, killing and
destroying with none to stop it.
Its foul breath stank out the
kingdom.

Then, to keep it contented in
its swamp, the people of the
nearby city of Sylene each day
left two sheep tethered at the
water's edge.

The dragon was fed, and so
left the unhappy kingdom alone.
Then it seems the good people
of Sylene ran out of sheep.
The dragon felt hungry again
and rumbled and roared. In

desperation they decided upon human sacrifice to keep the dragon at bay. Each night lots were drawn and the unlucky citizen was led out to the swamp the next morning and tethered to a stake to await his or her grisly fate.

Alas, one day, the lot fell to the king's only daughter, Sabra. In vain the monarch appealed for someone to take her place. Not unexpectedly there were no volunteers! So, early the next morning, the woebegone Sabra was led out from the city, dressed in the flowing garments of a bride, to meet her death in the dragon's jowls.

Then as the fire-breathing creature lumbered towards its breakfast, bold St. George galloped fearlessly to the rescue.

He braved the gnashing fangs and slashing claws, drove his needlesharp lance through the writhing monster's scaly neck and pinned it to the soft earth. He then dismounted and freed the grateful maiden. But first he took her girdle, looped it about the creature's neck and used it like a leash to lead the wounded monster dog-like towards the city.

There was panic. As St. George walked towards one gate there was a concerted rush to get out of the other. The king and a few stout-hearts stood firm, for the dragon now seemed quiet and harmless enough. St. George told them that if they all promised to become Christians he would slay the dragon then and there!

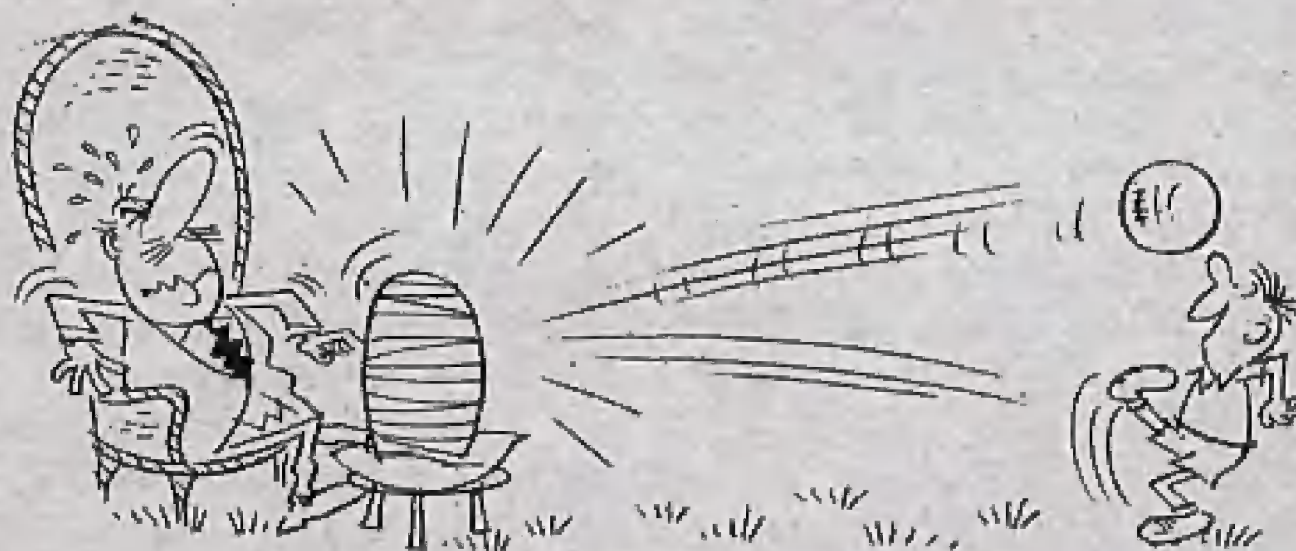


The promise was made, the dragon was slain and twenty-five thousand men, and their wives and their children, were baptised into the Christian Faith. The king offered St. George his daughter's hand in marriage and a huge reward in gold. The soldier saint accepted the former and told the king to distribute the money to the poor and needy.

So far there is nothing in the legend to qualify him as the patron saint of England. He earned this honour almost nine hundred years later when he was reputedly seen helping the English Crusaders fight the Saracen defenders at the siege

of Antioch. He was immediately adopted by many knights as their patron, and Richard the Lionheart was supposed to be thenceforth a great admirer of the saint's prowess.

The truth behind the legend is less well-known and harder to find. Some authorities say that there is no truth in the legend at all, and that it is just another case of the Christian religion taking an old pagan story to itself. These authorities claim that the story of St. George is no more than an adaptation of Theseus slaying the Minotaur, or of Hercules killing the nine-headed Hydra in the swamp.



"Oh, good kick, Uncle!"



In Wolf's Clothing

In Brittany there lived a young baron, who was a great favourite of the King of France. The baron had a very beautiful wife, whom he showered with every possible luxury and costly gift. But his wife had lost her heart to a knight at court, and her mind was forever filled with evil schemes to rid herself of her unwanted husband.

As the baron was such a close friend of the King, she dared do nothing that would arouse the slightest suspicion, but there was something in the baron's behaviour that could be helpful. For every month at the time of the full moon, the baron disappeared for three whole days. No one knew where he went,

and although she tried to have the baron followed, his absence each month remained a mystery.

She concluded that there must be some dark secret the baron was hiding, so the next month when the baron returned, she pestered him with questions and accused him of keeping secrets from her. In the end the baron, upset at his wife's tearful reproaches, told her his grim secret.

"Years ago a curse was laid on me," he said heavily. "It is a dreadful curse, and every month for three days I have to take the shape of a wolf and roam the forest."

"But how do you change

into a wolf?" she asked.

"As soon as I go into the forest," the baron said, "I take off my clothes and immediately I change into a wolf. At the end of three days, I put on my clothes again and become a human being."

"But supposing your clothes were stolen?" she persisted. "What happens then?"

"I should remain a wolf forever," replied the baron with a ghost of a smile. "But do not worry, I make sure that my clothes are safely hidden."

It soon dawned on the baroness that here was the opportunity to rid herself of her husband, and no one would have any inkling as to his fate. From then onwards she plagued the baron with questions, and maintained that someone should guard his clothes against a possible passer-by accidentally finding them.

The baron thought his wife was worrying unduly over his well being. "Why do you fret so much?" he said. "My clothes are well hidden under a loose paving stone in the old monastary ruins. No one ever goes near the place as it is reputed to be haunted."

Now, that she knew the secret



hiding place, the baroness laid her plans carefully. The next month, when the baron went off, she sent for her knight admirer, and gloatingly told him that now they could rid themselves of the baron.

The knight, who was just as unscrupulous as the baroness, chuckled evilly. "Then we can marry and enjoy all that the poor fool possesses."

Early the following day, the knight went to the ruined monastery and he soon found the loose paving stone. Making sure no one was around, especially a wolf, the wicked knight lifted out the stone, and quickly bundling up the baron's clothes,



hastened back to the baroness.

That evening, the baroness and the knight celebrated their good fortune. The baroness laughed. "Tomorrow we will make it known that the baron met with a fatal accident while out hunting."

The knight added with a grin. "He shall have a great funeral. Then afterwards we can marry."

As for the baron, at the end of his three days as a wolf, he slunk into the monastery, only to find his clothes had gone! As he crouched before the hole in the ground, the baron slowly realised that his wife had played him false, and now he would

have to remain in the forest as a wolf, until the end of his days.

For over a year, the baron as a lone wolf, roamed the forest scavenging for food, and craving for the days when he had enjoyed life as a human being. Meanwhile, his wife, the baroness, had married the knight, and they lost no time in squandering the baron's great wealth on riotous living.

Early one morning the wolf-baron was awakened by the peal of trumpets, and from his hideout, he saw his great friend, the king, with a large hunting party riding through the forest. At first he was eager to go and

greet his friend, then he sadly realised that as a wolf no one would recognize him and the hunting dogs would soon tear him to pieces.

Quietly the wolf-baron turned tail and made his way deeper into the underbrush. But the dogs milling around picked up the scent, and then the wolf-baron had to run for his life with a pack of dogs and the huntsmen hot on his heels. Although the wolf-baron dodged this way and that, he couldn't elude his pursuers, and was soon surrounded by a ring of yelping dogs and huntsmen.

The wolf-baron thought his end was near and in a last bid

to save his life, he loped across to the king, and standing on his hind legs against the king's horse, managed to lick the monarch's foot. The king, gazing down at the appealing eyes of the wolf, exclaimed. "Gracious, this is no ordinary wolf. It is as tame as a dog. Let it go free."

The huntsmen tried to shooe the wolf away, but the wolf-baron refused to budge, and when the cavalcade returned to the king's hunting lodge, the wolf-baron went with them, staying close behind the king's mount.

Thereafter, wherever the king went, the wolf would be close



at his heels. And as the wolf was so friendly, everyone at court petted and made a fuss of the animal.

Events soon afterwards took a dramatic turn. The baroness's new husband, the wicked knight, had to attend the court and as soon as the wolf-baron saw the knight, it sprang at his throat, and if several courtiers had not dragged the wolf off, it would have killed the knight, who shaking with fright, cowered behind the king.

The king thought the wolf's behaviour very strange, and dismissed the incident from his mind until several weeks later, when on a hunting trip, he called at the baron's castle. The baroness came out to welcome the king, and at the sight of her, the wolf-baron, with a ferocious snarl, leaped at the woman.

The baroness threw up her arms and screamed. "Take him away. It's the baron come to haunt me." The king was amazed at this outcry, and recalling the time when the wolf had attacked her new husband,

demanded to know what the baroness meant.

The baroness, flustered under the king's stern look, stammered out an incoherent story about wolves and ghosts. The king highly suspicious of the baroness's behaviour, ordered that she and her husband be detained for questioning.

Although the knight put up a bold front, the baroness, when threatened with torture, broke down, and confessed. When the king heard the story, he ordered that the wolf be put into a room, with some of the baron's clothing. Shortly afterwards, the door of the room opened and out stepped the baron.

The king was overjoyed to see his old friend again, but he had no sympathy for the baroness and the knight, who were sentenced to imprisonment for the rest of their lives.

Happily, the curse which had shadowed the baron was broken, and he spent most of his days at court and never once did he mention his life as a wolf.

In Next Issue the story of the Taj Mahal

भारत की सर्वप्रथम व सर्वाधिक लोकप्रिय...



ज्ञानभारती बाल पॉकेट बुक्स

प्रत्येक का मूल्य ₹ २०

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